

Officials tighten belt on speeders, seat belt violators

By Melanie Casey

The number of tickets issued for seat belt violations in the 6th Area Support Group more than doubled in just a few months, and speeders have been nabbed in increasing numbers each quarter this year.

The reason? The 6th ASG Provost Marshal's Office is "bumping up enforcement," said 6th ASG Provost Marshal's Office Operations Officer Art Richard.

Buckle up

Seat belt check points are being set up in different places – not just at the front gate – on all Stuttgart-area installations to catch those not buckling up.

Strict enforcement is in place for seat belt violators – and drivers should look for more random checks in the future, Richard said.

Speeders beware

In addition to enforcing seat belt laws, the 6th ASG PMO is also working aggressively to catch speeders.

"It's important that our drivers operate their vehicles safely, especially during school hours," Richard said.

Richard said 135 speeders were nabbed during the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2003, compared to 95 in the third quarter and 70 in the second quarter.

Richard said this is due in part to the PMO running a radar randomly on all installations.

The consequences of speeding on post can be dire.

Points are assessed for all speeding citations (see box

If you play, you pay

Treating motor vehicle laws like a game can have serious consequences. The following is a look at penalties for two common infractions:

Seat belt violations

- First offense: Seven-day driving suspension and two points assessed against USAREUR driver's license.
- Second offense: 30-day driving suspension and two more points assessed.
- Third offense: 180-day driving suspension, and two more points assessed.

Speeding

- Up to 16 kph over the limit: 3 points
- 17 to 25 kph over the limit: 4 points
- 26 to 32 kph over the limit: 5 points
- More than 33 kph over the limit: 6 points

Only 12 points are allowed against a USAREUR driver's license in a one-year period.

When drivers reach 12 total points – for whatever reason – they lose their license indefinitely.

source: 6th ASG Provost Marshal's Office

above) and extenuating circumstances could result in a reckless driving charge, which could add an additional six points to a speeding violation.

Commanders also have the ability to make what is known as a "discretionary suspension" for service members under their command.

The speed limit on Patch and Kelley Barracks and Panzer Kaserne is 30 kilometers per hour, which equates to about 18 miles

per hour.

In housing areas, the speed limit is 20 kilometers per hour.

Since much of Robinson Barracks is considered a housing area, Richard said, the speed limit for most of the post is 20 kilometers per hour.

For more information call the 6th Area Support Group Provost Marshal's Office at 430-5262/civ. 0711-680-5262.

Customs office offers Christmas tips

Gift-givers advised to check rules before mailing prohibited items

U.S. Army, Europe
Customs Release

Some people have a way of buying the wrong holiday presents.

While this is often a matter of taste, many items available in Europe that seem like good holiday presents violate customs rules.

Some are banned from import to the United States and others may be carried in baggage but not mailed.

Violations of customs, agriculture or postal regulations can lead to hefty fines and confiscation of the goods.

■ Meat and meat products are one big problem. "European delicacies like French paté, German wurst, Spanish chorizo salami and Italian ham are here for the buying and much sought-after in the States," said William Manning, Department of Agriculture adviser to the U.S. European Command.

"Unfortunately they can also carry the spores of Foot and Mouth Disease, a virulent livestock ailment eradicated in the United States," he added.

These products, all canned meats and soup mixes containing meat are therefore banned.

■ Fresh fruits and vegetables are also prohibited because they could harbor pests.

The threat to U.S. agriculture is so great that Customs and Border Protection can fine those who mail or take banned foods up to \$250. Criminal action for

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deliberate cases of smuggling can end in a \$5,000 fine and a year in jail.

■ Europe boasts many fine wines and spirits. The Europeans even produce liquor-filled candies that make original Christmas gifts. Unfortunately the U.S. Postal Service bans all liquor from being mailed, even if it is inside a piece of candy.

However, customs allows travelers over 21 years of age to import one liter of duty-free liquor. If you plan on taking more than one liter of beer or wine stateside as gifts, the federal taxes and duties are currently low enough to make it worthwhile.

■ Counterfeits of well-known trademarked items are also banned from the mail. Many producers of designer items have registered their trademarks with customs personnel who inspect mail for faked products.

Military customs offices can offer more advice on these and other holiday shipping questions.

For details visit www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/.

December: '3D' Prevention Month

Campaign targets drunk, drugged drivers

Army Substance Abuse
Program Release

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving (or "3D") Prevention Month.

Since 1982, the Army has supported National 3D Prevention Month activities to provide military community members with information the dangers of impaired driving and help reduce incidents of driving under the influence.

With the holidays approaching, there will be opportunities for many to place themselves at great risk by drinking and driving. Because alcohol is often available during holiday celebrations, chances of alcohol abuse increases.

It is important for anyone who intends to consume alcohol to first plan how he or she will be getting

Did you know?

- *Every hour of every day two people die because of alcohol- or drug-impaired drivers.*
- *Young adults are at highest risk.*
- *Even small amounts of alcohol can cause impairment.*

from one place to another.

Designated drivers, public transportation, taxis or walking are always good alternatives to driving after consuming alcohol. Of course, officials say, abstinence from alco-

hol is the best option.

Party hosts should ensure the following:

- Guests are provided with food.
- Alcohol abuse is discouraged.
- Non-alcoholic beverages and snacks are plentiful at the end of the party.

■ An empty couch or taxi is available for those who have consumed alcoholic beverages.

Zero tolerance is the rule in all situations. If you drink, don't drive.

Jeffrey Whitesell, Stuttgart's alcohol and substance abuse prevention coordinator, is available to teach a 3D prevention training course or provide the necessary training materials for the class.

For more information call 431-2743/civ.07031-15-743 or e-mail whitesellj@6asg.army.mil.